

Massachusetts Area Code Overlay Customer Education Plan

Background:

On April 25, 2000, the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE) ordered the implementation of four new overlay area codes in Eastern Massachusetts by May 1, 2001.

One new code will overlay each of the four existing codes in Eastern Massachusetts. Advantages of the overlay method are:

- Nobody with existing phone service has to change his or her number.
- Businesses do not have to change stationery, signage, advertisements, customer records, etc.
- New but simple dialing patterns will be put in place.

The overlay will require a change in the way that most local calls are dialed. Beginning May 1, 2001, all customers will have to dial 10 digits (area code + 7-digit phone number) for local calls that are currently dialed with only seven digits. Local calls may also be dialed using 1+10 digits. There will be a permissive dialing period beginning September 15, 2000, where local calls dialed with seven digits, 10 digits, or 1+10 digits will go through. Customers will continue to dial all regional toll and long distance calls with 11 digits (1 + area code + 7-digit phone numbers), as they do today.

Telephone numbers in the new overlay area codes will be available for assignment beginning June 1, 2001. A minimum three-month announcement period, where callers hear an announcement if they dial calls incorrectly will start May 1, 2001.

Bell Atlantic will begin its customer education on the new area codes prior to the start of permissive dialing. This document describes the components of the Bell Atlantic customer education plan, which have been used successfully to educate customers in other areas in the Bell Atlantic service territory where an area code overlay has been implemented.

Strategy:

- Design the customer education plan and materials to inform customers of area code overlay implementation, new dialing requirements for local calls within eastern Massachusetts, and key dates.
- Focus on eastern Massachusetts permissive dialing period in all communications to condition consumers to change dialing habits beginning with the start of the permissive dialing period.
- Use a mix of mass communications vehicles targeting eastern Massachusetts customers (bill inserts, advertisements) and more targeted communications efforts reaching senior citizens, disability and foreign language communities.
-

Plan Overview:

The Bell Atlantic customer outreach and education effort for the eastern Massachusetts area code overlay will include the following:

- **news releases** distributed at various points throughout the campaign to local, regional, ethnic, and trade press, as well as local cable access stations and posted on the Bell Atlantic web site,
- **directory updates** to introductory pages, covers, listings, white and Yellow Pages filler blocks,
- **print advertisements** in Massachusetts major daily newspapers,
- **bill insert** in all Massachusetts residence and business bills.
- Area code overlay messages in Bell Atlantic **customer newsletters**,
- **fact sheets** distributed by Bell Atlantic Public Affairs and outreach managers from Bell Atlantic Center for Individuals with Disabilities to consumer groups, businesses and organizations representing people with disabilities, and
- **letters** to eastern Massachusetts municipalities, senior centers, police and fire chiefs, chambers of commerce, state tourism bureaus, consumer organizations and disability groups.

An overview of the timing and key messages associated with each of these initiatives is outlined on pages 4-6 of this plan.

Key Messages:

Throughout the public education campaign, the following messages will be used (although the specific messages may change depending upon the targeted audience for each piece).

- Eastern Massachusetts needs new area codes to meet the demand for more telephone numbers.
- Four new area codes have been assigned to "overlay" the current area codes in eastern Massachusetts. The **only** significant change for customers in eastern Massachusetts will be the way that local 7-digit calls are dialed. Customers in 413 **are not** affected by any change in dialing procedures.
- New dialing pattern for eastern Massachusetts customers only:
 - *For local calls within the same area code: dial "**Ten-number Number**" (area code + 7-digit telephone number)*

- Key consumer dates:
 - Four-month eastern Massachusetts permissive dialing period begins September 15, 2000.
 - Eastern Massachusetts mandatory dialing begins May 1, 2001
- Customers in Eastern Massachusetts should start using 10-digit dialing whenever they dial a local call beginning September 15, 2000.
- Customers should give an area code and get an area code whenever exchanging telephone numbers with relatives, friends and business associates.
- Beginning September 15, 2000, customers should reprogram any automatic dialing equipment or services that are currently programmed to dial a 7-digit local number. This includes speed dialers, computers used for Internet access, modems, fax machines, security and alarm systems, etc.
- Even though local dialing patterns will change, rates and calling areas are not affected. A local call is still a local call. A toll call is still a toll call.

Activity	Date(s)	Key Messages
<p>News Releases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start of permissive period 2. Start of mandatory period <p><i>All releases will be added to Bell Atlantic web site. Additional distribution to industry and consumer</i></p>	<p><u>Release Date:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior to start of permissive dialing. 1. Prior to start of mandatory dialing on May 1, 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local dialing changes required • Key consumer dates • Equipment reprogramming needed • 9-1-1 dialing doesn't change • Rates don't change • Changes do not impact customers in

<i>groups, ethnic media, trade press, cable access.</i>		413 area code.
<p>Directories</p> <p>1. Revise introductory pages to include new local dialing procedures</p> <p>1. Revise listings to include 10-digit numbers</p>	As soon as practical after the start of the permissive period and continuing through one full cycle of all Massachusetts directories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialing procedures for local vs. long distance calls • Key consumer dates
<p>Print Advertisement</p> <p>Advertisements placed three times in major dailies across the state</p> <p>Radio Advertisement</p> <p>Advertisements placed on major eastern Massachusetts stations</p>	<p>Prior to May 1, 2001 to announce start of mandatory period</p> <p>Beginning 3 weeks prior to mandatory dialing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local dialing changes required • Key consumer dates • Equipment reprogramming needed • 9-1-1 dialing doesn't change • Rates don't change • Changes do not impact customers in 413 area code.

Activity	Date(s)	Key Messages
<p>Bill Insert</p> <p>To be included in all</p>	On or before bill periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local dialing changes required • Key consumer dates

<p>Massachusetts residence and business bills. Extra copies to be printed and distributed to Bell Atlantic customer contact personnel.</p>	<p>beginning one month prior to the start of the permissive period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment reprogramming needed • 9-1-1 dialing doesn't change • Rates don't change <p>Changes do not impact customers in 413 area code. Include multi-lingual message on cover: "Important Information: Please have translated"</p>
<p>Letters</p> <p>Letters from Bell Atlantic Public Affairs managers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • municipalities (with sample text for cable access bulletin boards) • senior centers • police and fire chiefs • chambers of commerce • state tourism bureaus 	<p>Prior to the start of the permissive dialing period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key consumer dates • Local dialing changes required • Equipment reprogramming needed • 9-1-1 dialing doesn't change • Rates don't change
<p>Education/Outreach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alarm industry • CLECs, Resellers, IXC's, Wireless and Paging Companies 	<p>Beginning June 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key dates • Local dialing changes required • Equipment reprogramming needed

Draft Copy customer Bill insert introducing area code overlays in eastern MA.

Approved by:

(Headline)

Eastern Massachusetts to get New Area Codes and the Ten-number Numbersm

(Text)

By now, nearly everyone is aware that new four new area codes have been assigned to "overlay" the current area codes in eastern Massachusetts. In June 2001, new area code 857 will overlay the current 617 area code, 339 will overlay 781, 351 will overlay 978 and 774 will overlay 508. We'll all have to make some adjustments, but Bell Atlantic is here to help you as the changes take place.

What's Not Changing?

Your telephone number won't change. You'll keep your current area code and telephone number. That's because a new area code is going to cover the same geographic area as your current area code. We call this an area code "overlay." You keep your current number, and the new area code and new telephone numbers are assigned to new services and new customers when we run out of numbers in today's area codes.

A local call is still a local call; a toll call is still a toll call. Rates won't change as a result of the new area code. And you'll still get emergency assistance by dialing only 9-1-1.

What Is Changing?

The way you dial local calls is changing. Instead of dialing the familiar seven-digit telephone number when making a local call within your area code, you must now dial the area code too. We call it the Ten-number Numbersm. Beginning on September 15, 2000, you'll need to use it for all local calls within your area code. And when customers with new service start to get numbers in the new area codes, they will dial the Ten-number Numbersm too. Then, everyone in eastern Massachusetts will need to dial the Ten-number Numbersm to make a local call within or between area codes. But even if you dial a "1" before the area code when making a local call, the call will still go through as a local call.

What Should You Do Now?

Start using the Ten-number Numbersm whenever you dial a local number. And re-program any automatic dialing equipment or services that are currently programmed to dial a seven-digit number. Be sure to check speed dialers, the computer you use for Internet access, modems, fax machines, security and alarm systems, etc. Also, be sure to give an area code and get an area code whenever you exchange telephone numbers with friends, relatives or business associates.

Is That All?

Yes, that's all you have to do. But make sure you get your reprogramming done before May 1, 2001, because after that, calls dialed with only the seven-digit number won't be completed, and you'll have to re-dial using the Ten-number Numbersm.

Questions?

If you have questions, call us at (Telephone Number TBD), (DAYS and HOURS of OPERATION), or visit our Website at www.BellAtlantic.com/areacode. Bell Atlantic is here to help. That's something else that won't change.

Bell Atlantic Logo

MA (617,781,978,508) MO/YR